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Letter dated 18 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia of 16 April 2001 on the latest developments in the Gali District of Abkhazia, Georgia.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Chkheidze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 18 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia is deeply concerned with the latest developments in the Gali District of Abkhazia, Georgia.

The Georgian side is committed to finding a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and as stated on numerous occasions by President Eduard Shevardnadze, considers the peace process as the only acceptable way to the resolution of this problem. In this regard, the Government of Georgia attaches great importance to the recent steps taken with the support of the international organizations and the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General and aimed at restoring confidence between the sides and reaching a comprehensive peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Ministry would like to emphasize the significance of the activities of the Coordinating Council within the Geneva peace process format; the meetings of Working Group One under the chairmanship of the United Nations Chief Military Observer; and in particular, the meeting on confidence-building measures held at the initiative of the Ukrainian Government at Yalta on 15 and 16 March 2001, where the parties once again reaffirmed their responsibility of non-resumption of hostilities.

Against this background, the latest events in the conflict zone are particularly distressing: the Abkhaz armed groups are active again; the bus explosion near the village Khurcha killed one civilian; five under-aged children were severely injured in the mine explosion in the Gali District; five civilians were detained without any sound charges and two of them were murdered on the spot; the Abkhaz side resorted to absurd and cynical arguments — "violation of Abkhaz territorial waters", as they captured the fishing boat and kidnapped the five Georgian fishermen on board.

Undoubtedly, such criminal, provocative actions against the unprotected, civilian population are carried out by the forces opposing regional peace and stability.

The Government of Georgia expresses its deep concern regarding the present circumstances in the conflict zone and calls upon all involved parties — the United Nations, the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and other international organizations to take immediate measures for improving the current situation, not to allow the escalation of hostilities that could jeopardize the peace process.